

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 053099

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. CHILEAN CABINET RESIGNS

IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S REQUEST, THE CHILEAN CABINET AND MANY SUBCABINET MINISTERS RESIGNED MARCH 9, PINOCHET REPORTEDLY WILL ANNOUNCE HIS NEW CABINET WITHIN 24 HOURS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THERE HAVE BEEN RECURRENT RUMORS ABOUT CABINET CHANGES, BUT THE TIMING OF THE ACTUAL RESIGNATIONS WAS HELD VERY CLOSELY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME CABINET CHANGES MAY BE LINKED TO POLICY DEPARTURES WHICH MIGHT BE ANNOUNCED ON THE JUNTA'S THREE AND ONE-HALF YEAR ANNI-
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VERSARY, MARCH 11. (UNCLASSIFIED) SANTIAGO 1933, 3/9.

2. FRENCH BAR EC PRESIDENT FROM WESTERN SUMMIT

OUR MISSION AT EC BRUSSELS REPORTS THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL HAS BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE ON THE INCLUSION OF EC PRESIDENT ROY JENKINS IN THE MAY 7-8 WESTERN SUMMIT.

FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGUAD WAS THE ONLY HOLDOUT,

MAINTAINING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BODY TO BE REPRESENTED AT THE SUMMIT. DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL REPORTEDLY SAID IT WAS "OUTRAGEOUS" THAT THE US COULD ACCEPT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION WHILE THE EC STATES COULD NOT. (CONFIDENTIAL) BRUSSELS 2251, 3/9.

3. SOVIETS REBUFF JAPANESE FISHING ZONE PROTEST

EMBASSY TOKYO REPORTS THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR POLYANSKY TOLD VICE FOREIGN MINISTER SATO MARCH 8 THE USSR REJECTED JAPAN'S PROTEST AGAINST INCLUDING THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES IN THE SOVIET EXCLUSIVE FISHING ZONE (EFZ). POLYANSKY SAID THAT NO TERRITORIAL DISPUTE EXISTED BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE USSR, AND IF JAPAN PERSISTED IN LINKING THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES DISPUTE TO NEGOTIATIONS ON ACCESS TO THE SOVIET EFZ, ACCESS WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE. SATO REJECTED POLYANSKY'S ASSERTION THAT THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE WAS CLOSED, AND ACCUSED THE SOVIETS OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR LINKING THE TWO QUESTIONS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE FOREIGN OFFICE CONSIDERS POLYANSKY'S TOUGH TALK PART OF THE SOFTENING-UP PROCESS PRIOR TO FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPECTS THAT SOVIET NEGOTIATORS WILL STICK TO FISH DURING THE UPCOMING MOSCOW TALKS. (CONFIDENTIAL) TOKYO 3315, 3,9.

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4. LAOS: TROUBLES WITH GUERRILLAS

CONFLICT IN LAOS BETWEEN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR) FORCES AND RESISTANCE ELEMENTS APPEARS TO BE WIDESPREAD, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY BANGKOK, WHICH REPORTS BATTALION-SIZE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE GUERRILLA TROOPS. THE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE IS CAUSING LPDR AUTHORITIES INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF VIETNAM. HOWEVER, LONG-TERM PROSPECTS FOR THE GUERRILLAS WRESTING CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE COMMUNISTS ARE DIM. RESISTANCE ELEMENTS COMPOSED OF MEO TRIBESMEN AND LOWLAND LAO HAVE FAILED TO DEVELOP:

--ADEQUATE, RELIABLE SOURCES FOR SUPPLIES;

--EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP;

--LARGE-SCALE SUPPORT AMONG LOCAL POPULATION; AND

--POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SUPERIOR GOVERNMENT FORCES WILL OVERWHELM RESISTANCE GROUPS IN TIME, THEIR ACTIVITIES WILL REMAIN AN IRRITANT IN LAO/THAI RELATIONS AS EACH SIDE GIVES SAFE HAVEN TO THE OTHER'S GUERRILLAS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BANGKOK 5108, 3/9.

5. SECURITY COUNCIL CONCLUDES BENIN COUP ATTEMPT REAL

OUR MISSION AT THE UNITED NATIONS REPORTS THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL VISITING MISSION TO BENIN HAS CONFIRMED PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S CONTENTION THAT A COUP ATTEMPT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE IN CONTONOU ON JANUARY 16, 1977. THE VISITING MISSION CONCLUDES THAT:

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--"THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THE STATE OF BENIN WAS SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION."

--THE ATTACKING FORCE, MOSTLY WHITE, WAS TRAINED AT A BASE NEAR MARRAKESH, MOROCCO.

--THE ATTACKING FORCE WAS HIRED BY THE "FRONT DE LIBERATION ET DE REHABILITATION DU DAHOMEY."

--SIMILAR OPERATIONS COULD BE CONDUCTED ELSEWHERE AGAINST SMALL DEFENSELESS COUNTRIES FOR SIMILAR PURPOSES. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) USUN 664, 3/8.
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